

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

### Central Health Brackenridge Campus Redevelopment

#### BACKGROUND

The 14.3-acre Central Health Brackenridge Campus has served the residents of Travis County as a place to receive health care for over 130 years. The redevelopment of this site will begin in 2017 when Seton Healthcare Family will transition hospital operations into a new teaching hospital nearby that will be part of the University of Texas medical district. This redevelopment project presents an opportunity for Austin to create a vibrant and sustainable hub that connects new development such as an innovation zone, the medical district, and a revitalized Waterloo Park and Waller Creek green space with existing neighborhoods and community resources. This site will also continue to serve as a source of value and contribution for the health care safety net in Travis County.

Central Health is the public entity that creates access to health care for those who need it most in Travis County. Central Health has prioritized community engagement efforts as part of the Central Health Brackenridge Campus Redevelopment since the inception of the project. Beginning in June of 2014, Central Health has engaged in a variety of efforts including community forums, open houses, small-scale neighborhood and stakeholder meetings, and surveying residents through multiple channels.



#### CHALLENGES

According to City of Austin Demographer, Ryan Robinson, 110 new residents move to Austin each day. The city has ranked in the top 5 fastest growing metro areas in the U.S. for the last 4 years, drawing high concentrations of young professionals. Drivers for growth include a growing tech industry, a vibrant creative class of artists, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs, and a “Keep Austin Weird” ethos that honors a culture that has historically embraced all things local and quirky.

Austin is struggling to grow in ways that sustainably meet increased demand for infrastructure and support services. Austin recently ranked #8 on “Forbes Top 10 Cities with the Worst

Traffic” and in the top 100 U.S. cities with highest income inequality. Concerns are rising over affordability, gentrification, and ability to sustain growth as low income families find it harder to remain in central neighborhoods. Central east Austin was historically the neighborhood that African American and Latino residents were segregated through discriminatory zoning and lending practices. With a rapidly growing population, this neighborhood is becoming gentrified in a way that exacerbates income inequality.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Despite these rapid changes, the community still is strongly supportive of health care for low income residents. Voters in Travis County passed a referendum in 2012 to increase their own taxes by 5 cents to support the creation of the Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin. As the only community in the U.S. today that is home to a Tier 1 research university and that is building a new medical school, Austin has an almost unprecedented opportunity to draw new investment, jobs, and innovation to transform healthcare and other industries. The tax increase also directly supports Central Health’s efforts to develop an integrated delivery system that will enhance access to health care for those who need it most.

As the landscape of downtown changes to incorporate the Dell Medical School and new Seton teaching hospital, as well as other development such as the revitalized Waterloo Park, Waller Creek, and proposed innovation zone, the Brackenridge Campus may serve as a connective corridor to promote a sense of inclusion, collaboration, and to promote spaces that support a model healthy community.

By designing the process with a sense of inclusion, Central Health is utilizing public input and ideas to effectively design a plan that supports spaces where all sectors of the community gather, share ideas, work, live, access services, and enjoy new green space downtown. Central Health began seeking public input near the beginning of the master planning process to allow individuals to share their ideas for the campus in a way that is meaningful rather than just informing the community of a predetermined vision. Central Health’s design team is incorporating features that were inspired by community input into the master plan. By developing a project that includes this community vision, Central Health hopes that residents will see their place in the campus and the eventual development and take pride in this community resource.

## APPROACH

Because the whole community in Travis County stands to benefit from this project, Central Health designed a multi-pronged community engagement effort around the Brackenridge Campus redevelopment process to cast a very wide net to inform, engage, and partner with many segments of the population.

Below are summaries of some of the main community engagement strategies utilized within this project:

Outreach	Date	Participants
Open House	June 2014	134 (RSVP)
Community Workshop Meeting	November 2014	78
Online Stakeholder Survey	Jan – May 2015	416
Telephone and Neighborhood Canvassing Survey	Feb – April 2015	1113
In Clinic Consumer Survey	Feb 2015	210
Paper Survey	March – May 2015	40
Stakeholder Meetings	Sept 2014 – March 31	21 meetings
Community Forum	March 15	245 (RSVP)

1779

Survey  
responses

### Community events to present new information:

These community events were designed both to present information to and gather information from the public.

- **June 2014:** Central Health hosted an Open House with 134 participants to share an overview of the project.
- **November 2014:** Central Health hosted a community workshop to allow for dialogue and participation of community members to envision and share ideas related to the development project.
- **March 2015:** Community Forum at the University of Texas with two panels moderated by State Senator Kirk Watson to an audience of 209 members.
- **Upcoming – Fall 2015:** Two open house events to present information gathered from the public, provide an update regarding the master plan, and receive public comment.



### Smaller stakeholder and neighborhood meetings:

Multiple, ongoing presentations to interested groups and neighborhood associations have allowed for focused conversations with residents about their ideas and questions related to the project.

There have been two main focus areas within these smaller meetings:

- **Stakeholder groups:** Visited with community leaders, planning associations, professional groups and others to share progress on the project and solicit feedback
- **Neighborhood Meetings:** Presentations to multiple neighborhood associations with chances to engage community members in dialogue about the project

### Accessible community surveys:

Central Health has designed a multi-pronged approach to solicit public input from more than 1,600 community members through various survey formats, including over the phone, in-person surveys in neighborhoods, online surveys sent to a community stakeholders, and in-person consumer surveys conducted in clinics and eligibility offices.

- **In-clinic consumer survey** took place over the course of two weeks in February 2015, and used the help of bilingual Community Health Workers to receive input from patients utilizing safety net health care services in Travis County. The survey was designed with very simple language in English and Spanish. Participants included individuals with low literacy levels using the assistance of Community Health Workers. Questions asked about access to health care, the Brackenridge Campus, and other health initiatives.
- **Online survey** from January 2015 – May 2015 which allowed space for extensive feedback, with more detailed questions related to health care initiatives and options for the redevelopment project.
- **Phone surveys** were condensed versions of the online survey that asked about health care access and the Brackenridge Campus redevelopment project.
- **Neighborhood Canvassing** took the condensed survey into neighborhoods, primarily in East Austin in areas adjacent to the Brackenridge Campus. The project team contacted 438 residents by phone using both land lines and cell phones and 675 residents canvassing house to house for a total of 1,113 residents. Canvassing included residents in 78702, 78721 and a small portion of 78722 and 78723 bounded by Manor on the North, MLK on the South, I35 on the West and Airport Blvd on the East. The phone calls were made to residents living in the following zip codes 78702, 78721, 78723, 78724, 78754.



- **Paper Survey** was utilized in neighborhood meetings and distributed through community partners such as churches, non-profits, and neighborhood associations. These surveys were designed to allow for inclusion of individuals with less access to digital resources.

The feedback provided by surveys has highlighted particular themes related to access to care, new health initiatives, and effective communication strategies. Most survey participants have responded positively to the Central Health Brackenridge Campus redevelopment project. There is a sense of excitement about the potential for new more medical resources to the community.

A full report of the survey efforts will be released in the summer of 2015.

### Ongoing Updates

In addition to events and surveys, Central Health designed several systems to provide regular updates and information to stakeholders and the general public.

- We designed a dedicated website at [www.centralhealthcampus.net](http://www.centralhealthcampus.net) with information about the project, link to surveys, and event write-ups
- Central Health's Senior Director of Government Affairs, Central Health has provides updates to elected officials so that they are aware of and feel included in the redevelopment project.
- An e-newsletter was created to inform interested residents and stakeholders on progress on the project.

Through this multi-pronged approach for feedback, Central Health has allowed for inclusion of many voices and opinions. The process does not have an end date, rather, it will continue in different forms as the project progresses. As new details of the project emerge, Central Health intends to continue to solicit public input and provide regular updates through various channels.